



Strengthening partnerships with providers



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Welcome to my first edition of the Participating Dental Provider Update.

Although I have been with HBF for almost ten years, in a variety of health insurance management roles, I am most excited about my new role as HBF Health Partnerships Manager. I look forward to building strong, effective partnerships across the health sector, with the many providers who deliver quality services to HBF members.

Since our last Provider Update in November we have seen even more growth in the arrangements, with more than 346 dental providers now participating in the program.

This means that approximately 41% of providers initially invited to join the arrangements in January 2005 are now participating in the program and close to 30% of all dental services in WA are being performed by an HBF Participating Dental Provider.

Although the number of participating providers is continuing to grow, HBF remains focused on ensuring that our members have access to high quality affordable dental care.

We are working hard to expand our existing WA network of dental services and we were thrilled to recently welcome providers from Bunbury, Harvey, Bruce Rock and Merredin to the arrangements.

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of Provider Update, which features information on the 100% covered scale and clean offer, answers to some frequently asked questions, a call for nominations for the Participating Provider Consultative Committee and information on January's increase to fee schedules.

Please feel free to provide your comments at askhealth@hbf.com.au.

100% covered scale and clean

In keeping with the Federal Government's focus on disease prevention and HBF's focus on wellness, we're pleased to announce that HBF members are now entitled to one 100% covered scale and clean (D114) each year, from a Participating Dental Provider.

HBF Dental Administrator Sue Unsted said that over the past 12 months HBF has been working closely with the Participating Provider Consultative Committee to develop a benefit that will encourage members to take a proactive approach to their dental health.

"Based on these discussions it was decided that the offer of a fully covered scale and clean was the best option.

"To take advantage of this offer Participating Dental Providers just continue to bill patients as they currently do for this item number, from their current HBF fee schedule. HBF will then fully rebate the cost to the member," Sue said.

The benefit, which came into effect on 1 April, 2007 is outside of members' annual preventative and diagnostic limits and any further claims for a scale and clean will be rebated at the percentage they are eligible for, under their level of cover.

"HBF anticipates the offer of a 100% covered scale and clean will encourage members to visit their dentist on a more regular basis, thereby promoting good dental health to members, with no out of pocket costs," Sue said.

In this issue:

- **PARTICIPATING PROVIDER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE** – HBF calling for nominations
- **DENTAL FEES** – Increase to Participating Provider fee schedules
- **Q&A** – HBF answers some commonly asked questions

HBF calling for nominations for Consultative Committee

HBF is looking for participating providers who would like to play a greater role in the ongoing development of the Participating Provider Arrangements.

Interested providers are invited to nominate for two positions on the Participating Provider Consultative Committee, which will become available in July 2007.

The Participating Provider Consultative Committee meets quarterly and consists of six participating providers (five General Dentists and one Prosthetist) and representatives from HBF Health Insurance.

HBF Dental Administrator Sue Unsted said this is a great opportunity for Participating Providers to play a greater role in the arrangements.

"As part of the Consultative Committee nominees would have the opportunity to become involved in the future of the HBF Dental Arrangements," Sue said.

"Committee members provide support and advice to HBF on appropriate issues relating to the services provided to HBF members by Participating Dentists."

Nominations can be made by calling Sue Unsted on 9265 8878 or by emailing dentalpractitioners@hbf.com.au

Consultative Committee meeting update

At the most recent Participating Provider Consultative Committee meeting on Wednesday 14 February, 2007 a number of issues were discussed, including:

- The growth of the Participating Provider arrangements
- The introduction of the 100% covered scale and clean offer
- The call for nominations for the Participating Provider Consultative Committee

For more information on any of these issues, please contact HBF Dental Administrator Sue Unsted on 9265 8878.

Increase to fee schedule - January 2007

HBF has increased Participating Dental Provider fee schedules by 3.9%, following an independent review by Access Economics and an assessment of HBF's capacity to afford additional benefits.

The annual fee review for all Participating Dental providers took place at the end of 2006 and Providers were notified of the increase in December.

The 3.9% increase was applied to fee schedules in January this year and new fee schedules reflecting the increase were issued to Participating Dental Providers in December.

Commonly asked questions

In this edition of Update, HBF answers some of the most commonly asked questions about the Participating Provider Arrangements. If you would like more information on these questions or have other queries, please contact HBF's Dental team on 9265 8878.

Q: Can a provider contact HBF to increase some fees during the year?

A: HBF has put in place an annual review process involving Access Economics, an independent organisation that conducts an assessment based on values such as CPI, wages, interest rates, fuel, insurances, consumables and laboratory costs.

This forms the basis of any increase that HBF then applies to fee schedules of Participating Providers (the latest fee increases became effective on 1 January 2007).

Participating Providers are otherwise not able to increase their fees and remain within the arrangements. However, if a provider has a particular item or query in terms of their fee schedule then we suggest they discuss this with HBF by contacting the dental team on 9265 8878.

Q: What happens if an item number is not on a provider's schedule?

A: If a provider needs to utilise an item number, which is not on their schedule, they can contact the dental team on 9265 8878, who will assess the fee currently charged for the item number.

When assessing this fee they will look at the provider's current billing profile to ensure it's in line with how the provider currently charges. For example it may be compared to what 80% of providers would normally use as their common fee for this item number.